



Milwaukee County

Ethics Code Study Committee Recommendations and Summary of Ethics Code Revisions

- New Ethics Board Governance Structure

The recommendations include creation of a new appointment process in which board members will be nominated by leaders of the following long-standing, broad-based Milwaukee County civic, professional and faith-based organizations: Chief Judge of Milwaukee County - District One, Public Policy Forum, Greater Milwaukee Committee, Milwaukee Bar Association, Inter-Faith Conference of Milwaukee, and The League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County.

- Clarified Standards of Conduct

The Committee has recommended a clear set of standards of conduct setting forth “plain language” expectations and values relevant to public service, reinforcing the need for fair, impartial and conflict-free decision making.

- Streamlined Complaint, Investigation, Hearing and Settlement Procedures

The Committee has recommended revised Code language to: (1) eliminate elements of duplication and confusion in the investigational hearing process of considering complaints; (2) encourage settlements of certain cases via voluntary settlements; and (3) articulate potential sanctions more clearly.

- Ban on Political Activity

The recommendations contain a new provision barring county officials from the use of county resources in pursuit of political activities.

- Protocol Established in Cooperation with Milwaukee County District Attorney

A new protocol adopted in cooperation with the Milwaukee County District Attorney’s Office will identify the process for action on suspected Code violations and offers Milwaukee County municipalities additional guidance in processing ethics questions.

- Advisory Opinion Process Clarified and Designed to Encourage Code Compliance

A revised mechanism is recommended whereby those covered by the Code are encouraged to seek guidance from the Ethics Board on questions related to Code compliance.

- Education and Training

The Committee recommends a robust education component be a part of the Ethics Board’s Responsibilities so that those covered may be properly informed about the principles and policies of the County Ethics Code. Such an education component is crucial in encouraging voluntary compliance and preventing unintentional violations.

- Adequacy of Resources

The Committee encourages policy-makers to demonstrate a commitment to Ethics Code administration, education, and enforcement by ensuring sufficient resources be made available to the Ethics Board.